



*Let the mind manage the body
Que l'esprit gère le corps*

**MAURITIUS
EXAMINATIONS
SYNDICATE**

**NCE 2023
GRADE 9
ARABIC**

Subject code: N660

EXAMINERS' REPORT

April 2024

Key Messages

- A reasonable number of candidates have attained the requisite proficiency levels in terms of fundamental vocabulary, basic grammar and elementary reading skills.
- It is strongly recommended for candidates to engage in extensive reading to enhance their Arabic vocabulary.
- Candidates are advised to carefully read and comprehend instructions.
- Candidates should allocate their time effectively to ensure they have ample opportunity to address the essay writing task.
- Candidates must acquaint themselves with the grammatical terminologies specific to Arabic language.

- In grammar, candidates are still having difficulty with the following:
 - ◇ verb-subject agreement
 - ◇ forming comparative
 - ◇ *idhafa* structure (possessive)
 - ◇ transforming verbs into nouns of instrument
 - ◇ transforming nominal sentences into exclamatory and verbal sentences properly
 - ◇ changing the present tense into the jussive mood

- In Reading comprehension,
 - ◇ candidates have successfully answer questions that require literal understanding and demonstrate proficiency in reading comprehension
 - ◇ many candidates find questions that assess higher-order reading skills, such as making inferences, reading between the lines, and guessing the meaning of words in context, to be challenging.

- In Writing,
 - ◇ candidates are advised to pay attention to their use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
 - ◇ weaker candidates struggle with their writing tasks.
 - ◇ candidates should choose the question that best aligns with their knowledge of Arabic.
 - ◇ narrative essays require candidates to develop a storyline and use a variety of sentence structures and a wide-range of vocabulary to maintain the reader's interest. Candidates should avoid simply providing a series of events, without attempting to create any effect for the reader.
 - ◇ descriptive essays require candidates to demonstrate a very wide range of vocabulary to create atmosphere. However, narrative essays are often written instead of descriptive ones. Candidates are encouraged to use sensory language to describe what they see, hear, smell, touch and taste in order to consistently create vivid atmospheres.

- In Translation,
 - candidates generally perform well when it comes to finding the appropriate vocabulary for translation.
 - many candidates find it challenging to apply grammatical rules to their translations.

General Comments

The NCE Arabic assessment aims to assess the linguistic competencies of candidates in Arabic beyond Grade 9 and Grade 9+. It measures the skills and competencies outlined in the National Curriculum Framework and in the Teaching and Learning syllabus. The assessment tasks focus on evaluating reading comprehension, writing proficiency, grammar knowledge and proficiency in Arabic usage and Translation.

Based on the results of the 2023 NCE Arabic Assessment, it can be noted that candidates in this year's examination session showed a marginal improvement, with a pass rate of 76.3% compared to the previous year. This indicates that many candidates have successfully acquired the fundamental skills for further learning. A majority of the candidates demonstrated competence in essential language skills such as reading, writing, grammar and language usage. However, it is important to note that there exists some disparity in the levels of achievement among the candidates.

In the domain of reading, irrespective of the level – be it elementary or advanced, candidates perform well when they can effectively retrieve explicit information. However, a significant number of candidates continue to encounter difficulties when faced with tasks that demand higher order skills such as drawing inferences, deciphering implied meanings, or determining the contextual meanings of vocabulary.

Regarding vocabulary, the assessment of basic, everyday vocabulary was satisfactorily done by many candidates. Nevertheless, a considerable number of candidates, encountered difficulty in demonstrating comprehension and employing diverse and precise vocabulary. This deficiency was particularly evident in the vocabulary question within the extended reading task (Question 8, item 12), resulting in disappointing performance by the candidates. It is noteworthy that candidates exhibited limited proficiency in using sophisticated vocabulary while writing their essays.

When it comes to writing, the performance in the functional writing task (Question 7) was better done than the extended writing task. It is strongly recommended for weaker candidates to avoid leaving their responses and instead make an attempt at addressing the provided prompts in this question. For the extended writing task, the narrative essay was the most common chosen option, but it generally did not meet the required standards. Only a small number of top performing candidates were able to effectively develop the plots and employ accurate grammar, spelling, and punctuation, as well as a variety of sentence structures. Those candidates who opted for descriptive essays often struggled to produce high quality work, falling into the narrative trap. Nevertheless, it is

advisable for candidates with an extensive vocabulary to approach descriptive essays, as they have the potential to vividly describe a scene and consistently create an engaging atmosphere.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1 – Basic Grammar

Question 1 tests an array of fundamental grammatical concepts in Arabic. The areas covered include pronouns (personal and relative), subject and predicate, verb conjugation in the present tense, prepositions, *Idhafa* structure (using objects as possessive nouns), negation in verbal sentences, the use of *Inna* and its equivalents, transforming verbs into nouns of instrument, forming comparatives, transforming sound masculine plurals into sound feminine plurals, changing the present tense into the jussive mood, transforming nominal sentences into verbal and exclamatory sentences, and rearranging words to form a coherent sentence.

The most proficiently accomplished tasks encompassed personal pronouns, subject and predicate identification, verb conjugation in the present tense and commonly used prepositions. Conversely, candidates encountered greater challenges when confronted with tasks assessing the *Idhafa* structure, changing the present tense into the jussive mood, transforming nominal sentences into exclamatory sentences and rearranging words to form a coherent sentence.

Item 1 – The majority of candidates demonstrated a strong understanding of personal pronouns. They effectively used the pronoun ‘I’ in most cases.

Item 2 – This particular item assessed the concept of subject and predicate, and overall, candidates performed well. They correctly recognised that the answer should be in masculine singular form, as the predicate always agrees with the subject. By accurately identifying the subject and predicate, candidates can use appropriate verb forms and construct coherent and meaningful sentences.

Item 3 – Candidates made significant progress in answering the question related to verb conjugation in the present tense. They grasped the importance of conjugating (تسكن أختي في شيشيل ويسكن أخي في) (فرنسا) the verb in the singular masculine form, aligning it with the subject’s gender and number.

Item 4 – When prepositions are combined with verbs, they can influence the function, form, and meaning of the verbs. A majority of candidates understood that the required preposition (سلم عمر) (علي صديقه الحميم) had to be used after the verb.

Item 5 – This item tested the *Idhafa* structure in a more intricate context by incorporating object as possessive nouns. This presented a notable challenge for a considerable number of candidates. An array of responses was obtained, highlighting the candidates’ uncertainty.

Item 6 – This item tested the application of relative pronouns. Several candidates incorrectly selected the plural form as the answer. In Arabic, nonhuman plurals are grammatically feminine singular regardless of the original gender of the nonhuman singular word. Only a small number of candidates correctly chose the feminine singular form (التي).

Item 7 – This item assessed candidates' understanding of negation in verbal Arabic sentences. They were required to demonstrate their knowledge of the appropriate negation particle in present tense structures. Unfortunately, some candidates selected option A as their answer (الناس في موريشيوس لم (يحبون العيش في كندا), not realising that the particle (لم) would cause changes in the verb immediately following it.

Item 8 - Quasi-Verbs (such as 'Inna' and its equivalents) were used to assess the skill of correctly identifying the appropriate diacritic mark when the word is positioned after the Quasi-Verbs. In this particular task, the word was in singular form, which proved to be relatively straightforward for the majority of the candidates.

Item 9 – Many candidates exhibited difficulty in effectively transforming the verb into a noun of instrument. This challenge arose from their inadequate comprehension of the key terms presented in the question. Proficiency in comprehending Arabic terminologies holds significant importance in this task. Though, the answer proved to be a widely recognised word (المفتاح); however, a considerable majority of candidates were unable to secure the accurate answer.

Item 10 – In this task, candidates were instructed to create the comparative form of a given adjective. Several candidates encountered challenges in understanding the meaning of comparative form in Arabic, consequently, leading to incorrect responses such as (بسرعة، سريعاً، سريعة).

Item 11 - Most candidates attempted this item successfully. The expected answer was: (صائمات) Weaker candidates at times provided either the singular or the dual form of the word.

Item 12 – In this item, candidates were required to insert the given negation particle to the verbal sentence. A significant number of candidates faced difficulty in making the necessary changes to the verb. Additionally, some candidates made spelling mistakes (يحتفلو) in their answer, resulting in the loss of marks.

Item 13 – The transforming of nominal sentences to verbal sentences is a common task. Despite its frequency, many candidates still find it challenging when it comes to agreement of the verb. It is important to note that Arabic language allows for flexibility in the placement of the verb in relation to the subject. In cases where the verb follows a plural subject, it too must agree in number and be plural. However, when the verb precedes a plural subject, it should be in singular form. This distinction in verb agreement is crucial to ensure grammatical accuracy.

Item 14 – This task proved to be the most challenging for the majority of candidates. Many of them struggled with understanding the Arabic terminology, leading them to transform the sentence into the negative or interrogative form (هل الدرس سهل؟/ ليس الدرس سهل). On the other hand, candidates who did understand the task, were unable to properly change the nominal sentence into an exclamatory sentence. Some of the incorrect answers included (ما أدرس سهل! / يا لها الدرس سهل!). It is important to note that punctuation plays a crucial role in this task.

Item 15 - This was yet another challenging item where many candidates were unable to rearrange the words to make a coherent sentence. Some of the incorrect answers included (عندما وصل رجال الإطفاء أطفأوا الكبير الحريق/ وصل رجال الحريق عندما الإطفاء الكبير أطفأوا).

Educators are strongly encouraged to enhance students' preparation for this question by including a range of assessment formats, such as multiple-choice items, matching exercises, fill-in-the-blanks, selecting the correct option, and open-ended questions. Additionally, it is essential for students to possess a solid understanding of Arabic instructions and grammatical terminologies in order to effectively respond to the question. Furthermore, educators are recommended to refer to the Teaching and Learning syllabus for comprehensive guidance on addressing grammar and sentence structure components within this specific question.

Question 2 – Basic Vocabulary

This question assesses knowledge of basic vocabulary items at this level. In general, this question was satisfactorily done, indicating that knowledge of basic vocabulary items has been acquired by most.

The best-done items were:

Item 1 لا تستطيع سميرة أن تخرج في المطر. إنها نسيت مظلتها.

Item 3 علينا أن نخرج ألف روبية من البنك.

Item 4 كم الساعة الآن من فضلك؟ ساعتي مكسورة.

The following items proved to be challenging:

Item 2 الجوافة فاسدة. لا بد أن نرميها.

Several candidates misunderstood the meaning of the key word 'rotten', which resulted in them selecting random answers. A common wrong answer was 'eat'.

Item 5 جدي مريض. اتصل بالطبيب فوراً.

This item assessed the understanding of adverbs. Many candidates had difficulty distinguishing between 'suddenly' and 'immediately'.

To get ahead in a language, it is important to build up a base of essential vocabulary. In this context, educators are advised to encourage the practice of vocabulary-based questions within context and

focus on common everyday vocabulary. This includes vocabulary related to topics such as house and home, family and friends, character and feelings, shopping, food and drink, clothing and colours, hobbies, etc.

Question 3 – Basic Reading Comprehension

Question 3 evaluated reading comprehension at an elementary level, specifically focusing on the ability to effectively locate information. In this assessment, candidates were tasked with reading two concise texts; one centered around a best friend and the other featuring a conversation between two friends. Overall, performance of the candidates was promising, with most candidates demonstrating proficiency in the fundamental reading skill of literal understanding. Moreover, it was encouraging to see limited cases of indiscriminate lifting.

It was however noted that few who resorted to indiscriminate lifting were penalised. In this kind of task, the importance of brief and accurate answers is necessary. Most items were mostly well answered by candidates.

The following items were less well done:

Part A:

Item 1 - What is the name of my best friend?

Expected answer: إسماعيل

Wrong answer: اسم صديقي إسماعيل وعمره ١٤ سنة

Part B:

Item 5 – Where will Sam and Fatima meet at 11 o'clock?

Expected answer: محطة الحافلات

Wrong answers: المدينة/ الحافلة

It is worth reminding educators that effective examination technique is an important aspect of this question. It is imperative for candidates to provide brief and accurate answers. Simply copying extensive portions of the text is unlikely to be rewarding to candidates.

Question 4 – Word Formation

Question 4 assesses candidates' knowledge and application of Arabic word transformation rules in a specific context. A short text was set with words that need to be transformed enclosed in brackets. Though only a few candidates scored full marks on this question, the majority still struggle with the task of applying word formation rules. Candidates were penalised for grammatical and spelling errors, even if they were able to identify the correct word transformation.

The following items proved to be problematic:

Item 2 حضرت صديققتها..... (حافل) وهن لبسن الملابس الملونة.

This item tested whether candidates' ability to transform the word (حافل) into (حفلة). Many candidates incorrectly wrote (حافلة) as the answer, as the meaning does not correspond to the context.

Item 3 استقبلنا أم زينب وطلبت منا أن (اجتمع)

In this item, candidates were required to transform the verb in the past tense (اجتمع) into the subjunctive form (نجتمع). Unfortunately, candidates who were able to identify the required transformation were penalised due to grammatical mistakes, such as (أجتمع).

Educators are reminded that although candidates must apply transformational rules to words in context, those words should be grammatically correct and free from spelling mistakes. Typically, the words being tested are common and familiar to students in their immediate environment.

Question 5 – Error Hunt

Question 5 evaluated candidates' aptitude to deal with grammar and spelling in context. A short text comprising of grammatical and spelling mistakes was set. The mistakes were already identified (through underlining) and candidates were required to correct them. This question was satisfactorily done by many candidates. Nevertheless, it was noted that the items 1 and 2 posed difficulty to a number of candidates in this task.

Item 1 جلس محسن كعاده إلى مادة الطعام بجانب النار.

This item aimed to assess candidates' knowledge of spelling. Many candidates struggled to find the correct spelling and provided 'مدة' as the answer. Candidates who were able to find the correct answer failed to write it grammatically correct in the given context (المائدة).

Item 2 وقالت له: هل حان وقته العشاء؟

This item also tested candidates' knowledge of spelling. A significant number of candidates were unable to find the correct spelling. The expected answer was (وقت).

Educators are strongly advised to provide candidates with ample practice in applying grammatical rules in context. It is important to remind educators that this task also requires candidates to correct spelling mistakes.

Question 6 – Cloze Text

Question 6 is the Cloze text- a higher order reading task which assesses candidates' overall knowledge of language including grammar, syntax and vocabulary. It requires candidates to use the

given context and draw on their linguistic knowledge to make informed guesses on suitable words for the given gaps.

In Part A, candidates were required to fill in the gaps with appropriate words from the given list. A satisfactory performance, was noted in this part of the question.

As for Part B, several candidates struggled to identify the missing words based on their own knowledge. The lack of a wide and varied repertoire of vocabulary words and the inability to draw on contextual and grammatical clues to make educated guesses could explain this difficulty.

The best-done items in Part A were:

Item 2 قال عادل لصديقه زيد.

Item 3 وأستريح قليلا على السرير.

Item 5 وألعب معه قليلا.

Some candidates found these items challenging:

Item 1 فيشعر عادل بالخجل.

It was evident that the candidates encountered difficulties in identifying the proper noun to fill in the gap, suggesting a lack of comprehension of the word. A significant number of candidates chose 'صديقه' as the answer, which fails to accurately convey the intended meaning of the sentence.

Item 4 علي أن أنتظر قليلا لأشرب الحليب لأنه حار.

In this item, candidates were unable to fill in the blank with the appropriate adjective, despite the clear context that was presented in the preceding sentence about drinking milk. It became apparent that 'حار' was the only logical answer.

Part B:

Item 1 فقال له: يا عادل، أنت تضيع كثيرا من وقتك/الوقت، عليك أن تغير عاداتك.

This item was generally well attempted. However, some candidates lost marks due to incorrect answers such as النوم/الأحيان/يوم/العمل

Item 2 نم مبكرا حتى تستيقظ/تنهض/ تصحو مبكرا في الصباح.

Though this item was accessible to candidates, several of them were penalised for grammatical errors such as استيقظ/يستيقظ/استيقظت. Common incorrect responses included: يعيش, which did not adhere to the sentence structure.

Item 3 رتب حقيبتك قبل أن تنام.

Candidates were required to provide an attached pronoun in this context, with only one option being permissible. Common incorrect responses included: هـ/هي/ها/نا which were deemed implausible given the context.

Item 4 العب مع الكلب عندما ترجع من المدرسة وليس في الصباح.

Due to candidates' lack of understanding, they encountered difficulty in identifying the suitable word to complete the given sentence. It is important for candidates to remember that Part B of the question is the continuation of Part A, necessitating the coherence of ideas. The response provided must align with the overall context of the cloze text. Candidates who answered المساء/ البيت/ الحديقة/ الفصل lost marks since these were contextually inappropriate.

Item 5 استمع إلى النصيحة/النصائح/المعلمة.

This task presented a significant difficulty for numerous candidates. Many of the candidates struggled to grasp the context and ended up suggesting irrelevant words, such as الدروس/ كلمات/ زميل/ الصف/ رسالتي.

Question 7 – Functional Writing

Question 7 is the basic writing task where candidates are expected to write a concise text comprising 50-60 words on a functional task. Candidates are essentially assessed on their ability to write with accuracy in grammar, spelling, and punctuation, as well as their ability to demonstrate a good awareness of the intended audience and purpose. While candidates were not expected to elaborate on the given points, they should address them clearly within the word limit.

Overall, the performance on this question was satisfactory. It was encouraging to see that fewer candidates left the question unanswered.

In this session, candidates were tasked with writing about a friend who is angry and not speaking to them. The purpose and situation were understood by candidates. However, some misunderstood the question and provided irrelevant responses, while others failed to address all the required points. A successful answer should have addressed the following prompts:

- Why was your friend angry with you? What happened?
- How do you feel when he is not talking to you?
- Apologise for what you did.
- What will you do to improve your relationship with him in order that he talks to you again?

In bullet point 1, candidates needed to mention the reason for their friend's anger. Most candidates successfully did so, citing reasons such as *breaking a favourite item, eating their friend's sweets, not attending a birthday party, or throwing a copybook in the trash.*

Bullet point 2 asked candidates to express their feelings when their friend was not speaking to them. The common response was that they all felt extremely sad.

In bullet point 3, candidates were required to apologise for their actions. They used different ways to express their apologies which were quite encouraging.

For bullet point 4, candidates had to mention how they would improve their relationship. Different responses were recorded, such as buying chocolates, cakes or gifts. While others mentioned helping with their friend's homework.

Successful candidates addressed all the given prompts. Their responses showed a clear understanding of the audience and purpose. They developed all required points and demonstrated accuracy in grammar, spelling, punctuation and syntax. Their vocabulary was appropriate and precise, and their writing was well-organised and coherent.

Less successful candidates showed a lack of understanding of the audience and purpose. They did not cover most of the prompts or only briefly addressed them at best. These candidates exhibited poor language skills, resulting in limited understanding. Their use of simple and inaccurate vocabulary led to disjointed writing.

The following samples provide a range of answers obtained this year. They are intended to give educators an idea of the standards and expectations of examiners.

Example 1

عزيمي/ عزيزتي أحمد
أكتب هذه الرسالة لأتكلّم معاً. يتمنا أن أغضب عليك لأنه في الحب حرام مع صديقتي عائشة. أنا أفكر كثيراً وقرر
ليعي اسنين لها. وكان يوم، فرأى أن لا يتكلم إليها. بدأ تشعر بحزين وفكر ما فعل له. وبعد قدم الاعتذار له، أفعل
كثيراً. سأفعل هذه رسالة ليتكلم معاً وتحسن العلاقة. أوقف هنا
مع الحب والقلات،
صديقتك فاطمه

This piece of writing falls below the expected standard. The given points are not properly addressed and the language used is insecure throughout. This response corresponds to a Band 4.

Example 2

عزيزي/ عزيزتي سارة

سلام من الله عليك. اتمنى ان تكون بخير. اكتب هذه الرسالة لاسئلتك عن السبب لا تتكلم معي. هل فعلت شيئا التي لا تحب معك؟ انا اشعر بالمشديد في قلبي. هل انني صديقه السوء لانها لا تتكلم معي. الآن، انا ابكي لانني حزين. انا بحبك كثير وانت صديقتي واحد. ماذا سافعل لاحسن العلاقه بينك وبينني حتى تتكلم معي؟ اتوقف هنا. الى اللقاء

This response falls within the average range when considering the coverage of key points. Nonetheless, the language falls short of the required level for this candidate to receive a high score. The presence of numerous grammatical and spelling inaccuracies at times obstructs the coherence of the text. Consequently, this response aligns with a proficiency level of Band 3.

Example 3

عزيزي عمر

كيف حالك؟ اتمنى أنك بخير. أنا أعرف أنك مغضب الي لأنني وضعت كراستك في المزلبة. من فضلك، تكلم معي أنا أشعر بالحزن وأنا أجلس بواحد في الحافلة. يا صديقي الحبيب أعذر لك، أنا آسف بما فعلت، لن أفعله أبدا. سأشتري لك كثيرا من الحلويات إن تتكلم معني وسأساعدك للواجبات المنزلية. من فضلك اتكلم معي مرة أخرى

This response demonstrated a clear awareness of the intended audience and purpose. Nevertheless, some minor errors were present, limiting its attainment of the highest level of proficiency and thereby assigning it to Band 2.

Example 4

عزيزي فيصل

السلام عليكم. أتمنى أنك في صحة طيبة. أكتب هذه الرسالة لأنني أريد أن أتحدث معك. غضبت علي لأنني كسرت قلمك اليوم الماضي. ما أردت أن أفعل ذلك ولكنك غضبت ولم تتحدث معي.

أشعر بالحزن بسبب ذلك. أقدم اعتذاري لك بما فعلت لأحسن العلاقة بيني وبينك، سأشتري قلمًا جديدًا لك. أتمنى أنك ستتحدث معي بعد ذلك. ومع ذلك، أنتهي رسالتي.

مع السلامة

صديقك

أحمد

This functional writing demonstrates proficiency (Band 1) as it addresses all the specified criteria, incorporates grammar, spelling, and punctuation accurately, and exhibits a deep understanding of the intended audience and purpose of the text. Although there are some minor errors present, they do not significantly hinder the overall coherence and clarity of the writing. Remarkably, achieving a high score is achievable even with simple and straightforward responses.

Question 8 – Extended Reading Comprehension

This exercise evaluates the learners' ability to read and understand a passage in Arabic. The questions encompass various aspects of reading comprehension, such as direct understanding, inferential understanding, and grasping the contextual vocabulary.

This year a narrative passage centered around Princess Noura, who played a significant role in resolving her country's water crisis, was provided. Candidates generally demonstrated satisfactory performance in questions requiring straightforward understanding of the text. However, less proficient candidates encountered challenges when faced with questions involving drawing inferences, reading between the lines, and elucidating the significance of words within the passage.

Candidates are reminded of the following:

- Lifting is permitted only when specifically requested, but no marks will be allocated for excess information.
- Grammatical and spelling mistakes will not result in loss of marks as long as the meaning and understanding are conveyed clearly.

The following items are worthy of comment:

Item 2: اذكر نتيجتين لهذه المشكلة.

Among the expected answer were: لم يكن للسكان طعام/ ولا ماء/ النباتات والأشجار تموت/ الحيوانات تموت

Common incorrect responses included:

الحيوانات والأشجار/ الأمطار لم تنزل لمدة طويلة

Weaker candidates partially answered and omitted key words, indicating a lack of understanding of the question.

Item 3: كيف نعرف أن الملك كان يبحث عن حل؟

Expected answer: جلس مع وزرائه

Candidates were penalised for answers suggesting *Princess Noura sat with her father or enjoyed her father's opinions*.

Item 5: استخرج جملة من الفقرة الثانية تدل على أن الأميرة كانت رحيمة.

The expected answer was: كانت تحزن كلما ترى معاناة سكان بلادها وليس عندهم أكل ولا شراب

Common wrong answers included: ستتحدث مع الملك عن هذا الموضوع/ فبدأت الأميرة تبحث عن حل لهذه المشكلة

Many candidates struggle with the meaning of the word (رحيمة) leading to difficulties in identifying the correct sentence. Others who copied indiscriminately did so due to a misunderstanding of the question.

Item 9: كيف رد الملك والوزراء على رأي الأميرة نورة؟

The expected answer was: فرح الملك والوزراء

The lift: فرح الملك ووزرائه بفكرة الأميرة was also given credit.

Item 10: من ساعد الأميرة في بناء خزان مياه؟

The expected answer was: السكان

A common wrong answer was حفروا جميعا خزانا كبيرا/ ساعد الأميرة فحفروا جميعا خزانا كبيرا

Candidates who responded with '*all of them*' were penalised due to the lack of precision in their answer. It is essential to remind candidates that understanding the nuance of the question constitutes a significant portion of the answer.

Item 11: في النهاية ماذا تغير في بلاد "بين النهرين"؟
This was a challenging item. Candidates had to infer the meaning.

The expected answer was:

حصل السكان على المياه/ انتهت مشكلة المياه/ بنى السكان خزان مياه

Common wrong answers were: شكر السكان الأميرة على فكرتها الرائعة/ بدأ يمطر بغزارة/ مشكلة المياه

Item 12:

Item 12 proved to be challenging by many candidates, as they struggled to grasp the meaning of vocabulary in context. Several candidates opted to skip this item altogether. Some attempted to provide translations for the words. This clearly indicates that candidates should read more and need greater practice with vocabulary in context. Notably, spelling mistakes were overlooked as long as the intended meaning was clear.

- i Incorrect answers included عكس المشكلة/ تتحدث عن أشياء مهمة
- ii Responses like الحجاب لجميع مياه الأمطار/ لطيف were not deemed correct
- iii Common incorrect answers were الثقيلة/ الكبيرة

Question 9 - Translation

Part A

This task evaluates the candidates' ability in translating commonly used English words into Arabic. The overall performance on this task was deemed satisfactory.

Among the best-done items were:

- Item 1** garden
Item 2 elephant
Item 4 now

Candidates, however, struggled with the following items:

Item 1 to run

Among the incorrect responses were "يركع/ يرجع". It is important to inform candidates that only one word "يمشي بسرعة" should be provided to translate each English word. Incorrect spelling, such as جراء/ جراء were penalised.

Item 4 fear

This item was poorly done. Several candidates provided the translation of the verb خاف instead of the noun as specified in the question. While it is derived from the same root, candidates are reminded not to alter the root of the word. Some of the answers that did not receive any credit include تقوة/ حزن/ قوف.

Part B

This question assesses candidates' ability in translating a short paragraph from English to Arabic. The candidates' performance on this question was deemed average, despite the text being within the comprehension level of all the candidates.

Item 1 Mr Samir is a good teacher.

A significant number of candidates struggled to accurately translate the commonly used term 'Mr'. The answer *المدرس* was not given credit.

Item 2 He comes on time in the classroom.

The translation of 'comes on time' proved to be challenging for the majority of candidates. Many provided incorrect answers such as *جاء في مرة/حين/ساعة/زمن*. It is important for candidates to pay close attention to verb tense. Answers that changed the present tense to the past tense, such as *أتى/جاء/وصل* did not receive any marks.

Item 3 Pupils listen to him attentively.

Candidates need to distinguish between the verbs 'to hear' and 'to listen'. Those who translated 'listen' as *سمع* were penalised. Moreover, the word 'attentively' was often mistranslated as *جيداً*.

Item 4 They do all the homework.

A majority of candidates performed well on this item. However, a small number of them incorrectly used the past tense form of the verb. Among the incorrect translations were *يدرسون كل وجبتهم البيتية*.

Item 5 They all succeed in the examinations.

A significant number of candidates omitted the translation of the words 'they' and 'all'. Additionally, some candidates mistakenly translated 'examinations' in the singular form as *"امتحان"*.

Educators are strongly advised to provide students with training on the application of grammatical rules and emphasise the importance of accurate spelling in translation tasks. Such instruction not only enhances students' translation skills but also promotes the development of their writing proficiency.

Question 10 – Extended Writing

In question 10, candidates were required to demonstrate their extended writing skills. They were given a choice between two titles: a narrative or a descriptive essay. The task aimed to assess higher order writing skills.

This year, candidates were given the option to either describe their school when the bell goes in the afternoon or to write a narrative essay which comprised the following sentence “*I never thought that I would one day receive such a gift...*”.

As observed in previous years, there is room for improvement in this task. Writing a continuous piece of accurate Arabic prose remains a challenge for the majority of candidates. However, this skill is essential for success in upper secondary.

Overall, the performance on this question was average. Some candidates did not attempt the question, while others made an effort to write something relevant. A small number of candidates, particularly those from the higher ability groups, showed a lack of ambition by writing the minimum required. Furthermore, these candidates struggled with vocabulary variety, grammar accuracy, spelling and sentence structure variety.

To help candidates improve, the following general advice is recommended:

- Candidates should carefully consider the key words in the essay titles to ensure their writing is relevant.
- It is important for candidates to respect the word limit and thoroughly review their work.
- Encourage the use of appropriate and varied vocabulary.
- Emphasise the importance of grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Encourage the use of a variety of sentence structures.
- Teach candidates to write in a logical and coherent manner.

Based on Examiners’ feedback, Educators are strongly advised to address spelling directly in class. Many candidates who were otherwise clear in their expression struggled with spelling words correctly, including basic words.

The majority of candidates chose the narrative essay option over the descriptive one.

The sample essays provided below demonstrate the range of answers obtained this year. They are intended to give Educators insight into the standards and expectations of the examiners. Each essay is accompanied by comments highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the writing.

Descriptive Writing

A small cohort of candidates undertook the task of composing a descriptive essay on the theme “Describe your school when the bell rings in the afternoon.” Regrettably, these candidates demonstrated a lack of proficiency in effectively developing their essays to evoke the required ambiance.

The prevalent issue observed in their essays was an overreliance on narrative elements, resulting in a disproportionate emphasis on recounting activities than vividly depicting the school environment when school is dismissed. Rather than immersing the reader in the sensory details of the scene,

candidates tended to provide a chronological narrative of their activities until the end of the day. This approach deviated from the essence of the task, which necessitate a descriptive exploration of the school setting during school dismissal.

Moving forward, candidates are encouraged to enhance their descriptive writing skills by focusing on creating a vivid portrayal of the scene, using sensory imagery, and evoking a sense of place and time to engage the reader effectively.

The following responses illustrate examiners' expectations in descriptive essays.

Example 1

كل التلاميذ قريب من باب الفصل. قال المعلم: "لا يذهبون قبل سوت الجرس!"
بعد قليل دق الجرس، كل التلاميذ دخل فصلهم. كان الحافلات ملونة في الفناء والسائقون أكلوا الغداءهم. بعض الطلاب ذهبوا إلى مركز الحافلة لركب الحافلة إلى البيت وبعضهم رجعوا إلى البيت بالسيارة.
في هذه الساعة رأيت العيوم في السماء. بعد قليلا نزل المطر بعزارة. التلاميذ الذين هم لعبوا في الملعب بعد وقت المدرسة جروا إلى مركز الحافلة بسبب المطر العزيرة.
بعض الأطباء فتهاو مطلتهم وذهبوا إلى البيت ماشيا. ذهبت إلى مطعم المدرسة لإشتري الطعام. رأيت ثلاثة طلاب فوق المطع ضربوا طالب الأخر.
بعد نصف ساعة انتهى المطر ووصل الشمس كل الطلاب مسرورا وابتسموا. بعضهم رجعوا إلى الملعب ليلعبون كرة القدم. وبعضهم بدأ أن يمشون ليذهبون إلى البيت.
في هذه الوقت دخل المعلمون المدرسة وركبوا سياراتهم إلى البيت. بعد ثلاثون دقائق دخل الناظر وعماله المدرسة. في نهاية اليوم دخل العمال الذين ينظفون المدرسة وأعلقهم باب المدرسة لليم.

This essay has a tendency to excessively rely on narrative elements. The specific scene in question is only briefly outlined as an introduction to a narrative-based approach that is not directly relevant to the topic. Furthermore, there are evident shortcomings in the spelling of basic words such as سوت . Mistakes are also noted in verb forms and tenses such as ليلعبون. The approach limits the achievement of this essay to Band 4.

Example 2

أخرج من الفصل عندما يدق الجرس وأدخل الفناء الواسع مزدحم بالناس. كان الجو جميلاً والشمس مشرقة في المساء الزرقاء والصفافية وكان النسيم الهادئ على وجهي وتطير شعري. الطلاب يجري هنا وهناك ويصرخون بصوت عالية.

أبدأ ان أمشي وكان الساعة يسير ببطء شديد. كان بعض الطلاب يلعبون معهم وهم مسرورون. أرى الوالدي يمسك يد الأطفال واتجهوا إلى سيارتهم ليعود إلى البيت. بعض الشباب يتحدثون ويضحكون معا في فرحة وسرور. أحد الطفل كأنه أبيض القلب، هو يعطي صديقه كعكة وأظهر على وجهه بسمة جميلة. بكى طفل صغير لأنه يريد أن يلعب مع أصدقائه ولكن حان وقت العودة إلى البيت. يقود المعلمون سيارتهم ليعودوا إلى بيوتهم. كان جميع الناس مشغولون في حياتهم. اتجهت إلى موقف الحافلة والناس هناك يشهدون الهاتف. فجأة أسمع صوت الحافلة يقترب مني وتقف أمامي. أركب الحافلة المزدحمة بالناس عائدين إلى البيت بعد يوم متعب في المدرسة.

This essay has details in the descriptions but lacks consistency in creating the desired atmosphere throughout. The vocabulary used is generally precise and there is some variation in sentence structures. The G/S/P and syntax are generally accurate. However, due to errors and lack of well-developed descriptions, the essay falls within Band 2, leaning towards the lower end of the band.

Example 3

يدق جرس مدرستي وتنتهي المدرسة. الآن الوقت للرجوع إلى البيت. يوقف المعلمون دروسهم لليوم ويأمرون الطلاب أن يجمعوا أشياءهم. ثم يخرج الجميع من الفصول.

يسرع التلاميذ الفرحة خارج المدرسة بعد يوم متعب. يجري بعض الطلاب هنا وهناك بسرعة البرق. الفناء مزدحم ومليء بالناس. التلاميذ مثيرون بنهاية المدرسة ويجرون إلى محطة الحافلات ليركبوا الحافلة للعودة إلى بيوتهم. بعضهم يرجعون إلى الدار ماشيا أو بالسيارة مع والديهم. يتكلمون ويصرخون إلى أصدقائهم بسرور. في بعض الأماكن أرى المشاكسين يدخلون ويعاملون أصغر الطلاب معاملة سيئة. يسخرون ويخدعونهم. فيحاول المدرسون أن يحلوا الموقف. الأصوات العالية والضججات القوية ترتفع من كل أماكن. اليوم الجو معتدل وصاف

والشمس ساطعة والنسيم هادئ. أسمع صوتا مريحا من تغريد الطيور. فتقرر مجموعة من التلاميذ أن يلعبوا كرة القدم في ملعب المدرسة. يجرون ويسقطون مرات كثيرة ويصيحون إلى زملائهم بسعادة. أما المعلمون المتعبون فيعودون إلى بيوتهم أيضا لكن العاملين يبقون في المدرسة للترتيب والنظافة مثل كل أيام السنة المدرسية. عند نهاية وقت المدرسة أشعر كأني أترك البيئة سعيدة ومثيرة وحيوية.

Although there are some minor grammatical errors, this is a Band 1 essay. The candidate focuses on what (s)he hears, what (s) sees to describe the scene when school is dismissed. The sentence structure and the correct tense give the essay a natural fluency which is very convincing. Vocabulary is certainly a strong point (المشاكسين، يسخرون، يخدعون، مثيرة، حيوية). There is a sense that the candidate is very comfortable using such words.

Narrative Writing

Overall, the narrative task emerged as the most favoured and frequently attempted among candidates. The performance was quite satisfactory. This year, candidates were asked to write a story which includes the line *"I never thought that I would one day receive such a gift..."*.

Candidates engaging with the narrative essay demonstrated the ability to insert the sentence given to them properly in their essay. The best candidates produced detailed storylines, employing very accurate G/S/P and precise vocabulary. They effectively used diverse sentence structures to captivate and retain the reader's interest. Conversely, weaker candidates struggled to develop a plot and used a very erroneous language throughout. Sentence separation issues were particularly noticeable in these scripts.

Below are examples of responses that align with examiners' expectations for narrative essays.

Example 1

كان في يوم السبت الماضي، استيقظت مكرًا في الصباح وكنت مسرور جدًا، لأنني كان عيد ميلادي. بعد صلاة الفجر تناول الفطور وجهزت لأذهب إلى المدرسة. ولما سلمت على والدي ولكن لم يتكلموا معي على عيد ميلادي. فكرت أنه لم يدرسوا أن اليوم يوم عيد ميلادي. فأذهب إلى المدرسة. وفي المدرس، لم يدرسوا أصدقائي أيضًا. شعرت بحزن شديد. فكرت أنه لا يذكروا أنه صديقي. وعندما دق الجرس في المساء، عدت إلى البيت بحزن شديد. ولما فتحت البيت، كان النور لم يكن منورًا. وفجأة سمعت صوتًا قال: "عيد ميلادك سعيد وكان النور منوارًا أيضًا. كنت مسرور جدًا. في البيت رأيت أصدقائي ووالدتي وعائلتي.

لم أفكر أنني سأستلم يوما مثل هذه الهدية." هو. اليوم الذي اعطى أبي تذاكرا لالذهاب إلى الفرنسي عندما نجحت في أمتحاني.

This essay demonstrates relevance; however, lacks depth in storyline development. Linguistically, it presents challenges with elementary vocabulary usage (مدرسة، مبكرا، نجحت). The grammatical structure exhibits clear inconsistencies in tense, agreement, and punctuation. Consequently, while meriting recognition for relevance, this essay is constrained to Band 4 due to evident linguistic insecurities.

Example 2

في الشهر الماضي، نجحت في الامتحانات وكان والدي ووالدتي في غاية الفرح لما سمعوا عن هذا الخبر السعيد. فأعطى لي والدي التذاكر إلى دبي لم أفكر أنني سأستلم يوما مثل هذه الهدية فشكرته من صميم قلبي. وبعد أيام بدأنا أن نستعد لسفر ممتع. ساعدت أبي في اعداد الحقائب بينما جهزت أمي الواجبات الخفيفة لنأكل في المطر. وفي ذلك اليوم، صحوت من النوم في صباح الباكر وركب أفرد أسرتي إلى المطر. وبعد نصف ساعة من السير، وصلنا هناك. كان المطر مزدحما بالناس وصرخ الأطفال الصغير بصوت العالي. وبعد أن سلمنا على أفراد الأسرة، ركبت الطائرة مع والدي ووالدتي. نزلت الطائرة في مطر دبي. كان دبي بلاد كبيرا وجميلا جدا! أولا اتجهنا إلى الفندق لنستريح لأن السفر طويل ومتعب وفي الأيام الأخرى، زرنا مكانا مختلفا مثل الصحراء حيث شاهدنا وركبنا الجمال. أيضا ذهبنا إلى مركز السوق. هناك اشترينا كثيرا من الهدايا لزملائي وأسرتي. استمعت بنفسني في هذه رحلة. وبعد أسبوعين، رجعنا إلى جزيرتي الصغيرة. كنت حزينا لأن اتحيت الرحلة. لكن وعدتني لأعمل بشدة. في دراستي العام القادم لأفرح والدي. الحمد لله لهذه رحلة.

This response lacks sophistication. Despite an attempt at complexity, the plot sounds more like a series of events. While certain sections feature accurate vocabulary (غاية الفرح، صميم قلبي، صحوت), the prevalence of spelling errors is notable. Hence, this response scores well, but cannot be awarded the best marks (Band 2).

Example 3

قفزت من فراشي وجريت كالجن إلى الحمام ثم التهمت فطوري الذي يتكون من الخبز المحمص مع مربى التوت والقهوة بالحليب. في ذلك اليوم ذهبت إلى المدرسة لأحصل على شهادات الامتحان الوطني. عندما وصلت إلى هناك، انتظرت في فناء المدرسة الواسع لأنني جنْتُ مبكراً. كانت السماء صافية كالمرآة والشمس ترسل خيوطها الذهبية عليّ. لقد استمعت كثيراً في تلك اللحظة. ولكن عندما دق نائب المدرسة الجرس تبدل السرور إلى القلق فألقى المدير كلمة موجزة إلينا. قال المدير ضاحكاً: "لا تخف يا طلاب. ستشاهدون جهودكم بدون أن تضيع الوقت". بعد ذلك ناداني المدير وذهبت إلى المنصة في خوف شديد. لم أستطع أن أمسك بنفسي. تنفست الهواء. كان المدير يبتسم ابتسما عريضاً عندما يقدم لي نتيجتي. لمحت إلى الورقة وكانت الفرحة بادية على وجهي. فشكرني المدير بنجاحي وبأخلاقي الحسنة. عندما رجعت إلى البيت، كانت أسرتي في غاية الفرح وأعلن أبي أنه سيأخذني إلى اليابان، بلد حلمي. عانقت أبي بقوة. لم أفكر أنني سأستلم يوماً مثل هذه الهدية.

A clear example of a complex and sophisticated piece of writing. This is undoubtedly a Band 1 essay. The candidate has an intricate plot and the language is essentially very accurate throughout. The vocabulary employed is indeed commendable (التهمت، تبدل السرور، غاية الفرح، الفرحة بادية على وجهي). Furthermore, the candidate adeptly uses diverse sentence structures, and the coherence in the ideas is noteworthy.